

REMARKS

Claims 1-40 are pending in this application. Claims 1-32 have been rejected in the Office Action dated October 12, 2006. Claims 33-40 have been withdrawn from consideration. By this Amendment, Applicant has amended claims 1 and 7. Applicant has canceled claim 2 without prejudice. Support for the claim amendments can be found in the specification and claims as originally filed, e.g., at page 6. The amendments introduce no new matter, and thus, their entry is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-3 and 7-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Hanamoto et al., (U.S. Patent No. 4,545,752). A reference must disclose every limitation of a claim in order to be considered an anticipatory reference. Hanamoto et al. disclose an injection molding device that includes a female mold 18 provided with air passages 58. col. 5, ll. 12-13. The air in the cavity of the female die 18 is evacuated through the air passages 58 while the compressed air is blown through the common air passage 51 and 50 so that the pattern sheet 32 is pressed against the cavity surfaces of the female die 18. col. 5, ll. 60-68. Molten plastic material is injected through the injection device into a cavity 60 defined by the mated male and female molds 16 and 18 and against the pattern sheet 32 which transfers patterns on to the surface of the molded articles or products. Col. 6, ll. 39-52.

The Office Action contends that Hanamoto et al. disclose a pattern sheet 32 which forms a skin on the outside of the molding material 60 which prevents material from escaping the mold cavity. Applicant submits that in view of the present amendments, Hanamoto et al. do not disclose a mold apparatus according to the present claims, which comprise, *inter alia*, "a gap in communication with the cavity and

the exterior of the mold apparatus for venting vapor wherein the gap is configured such that in combination with a mixture comprising a skin it allows escape of vapor from the cavity while at the same time does not allow escape of any significant amount of the mixture from the cavity." Indeed, there is no disclosure in Hanamoto et al. of a gap working in combination with the skin of a mixture which is present in the mold apparatus cavity to allow the escape of vapor from the cavity while at the same time not allowing the escape of any significant amount of the mixture from the cavity. In fact, Hanamoto doesn't teach anywhere in the patent that its device prevents any significant mount of mixture from escaping from a mold cavity. However, to the extent that the pattern sheet 32 prevents mixture from escaping through the air passages 58 as alleged in the Office action at pages 2-3, this is distinguishable from a gap working in combination with the mixture itself to prevent the escape of any significant amount of mixture while still allowing the release of vapor. Thus, Hanamoto et al. do not disclose all elements of the rejected claims, and Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 4-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Hanamoto et al., (U.S. Patent No. 4,545,752) in view of Oono et al. (6,413,069). In order for references to render a claim obvious, the combination of references must disclose each and every element of the claim, there must be a motivation or suggestion to combine the cited references and a reasonable expectation of success for such combination. Applicant submits that Oono et al. do not correct the deficiencies of Hanamoto et al. discussed above, and as such, the combination of references does not disclose each and every element of the rejected claims.

Furthermore, Applicant disputes the Office Action's contention on page 4, which states, "[i]n regard to claims 5-6 which are related to the sizes of the venting gaps...Hanamoto has recognized that small size of the venting gaps would prevent the trace of the gaps on the surfaces of the product." To the contrary, Hanamoto indicates that providing a fewer number of air discharge passages results in almost no imprints of the air passage openings on the surfaces of the finished products. See col. 6, ll. 17-29. Hanamoto has not recognized that small size of the venting gaps would prevent the trace of the gaps on the surfaces of the product at col. 6, lines 27-29, as indicated in the Office Action. Accordingly, the teachings of Hanamoto do not provide any suggestion or motivation or make it obvious to provide venting gaps in its device that are small enough so that the surface of the product would not be deformed and large enough to discharge the air forming in the mold cavity. Thus, the claims are not rendered obvious by the cited references, and Applicant respectfully requests that the above rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Additionally, Claims 11-32 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over by Hanamoto et al., (U.S. Patent No. 4,545,752) and further in view of Atake (6,220,849). Applicant submits that Atake also does not correct the deficiencies of Hanamoto et al. which were discussed above, and as such, the combination of references does not disclose each and every element of the rejected claims and does not render the claims obvious.

Furthermore, claims 13-14, 19-20, 25-26, and 30-31 are not obvious for the additional reasons discussed above. That is, the teachings of Hanamoto et al. do not provide any suggestion or motivation or make it obvious to provide venting gaps in its device that are small enough so that the surface of the product would not be deformed

and large enough to discharge the air forming in the mold cavity. Thus, the claims are not rendered obvious by the cited references, and Applicant respectfully requests that the above rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the claims are in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance is requested.

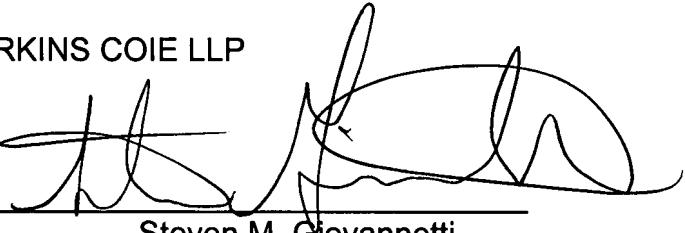
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